

Since 2013, I have been involved with New Haven Works in multiple capacities; as a member and consumer of services, volunteer, and staff member. I was introduced to NHW through the Citizen's Oversight and Accountability Team (C.O.A.T) during its infancy in 2013 after experiencing a layoff from state employment. I became a member and began volunteering while I continued my job search.

NHW is a totally unique program existing to serve New Haven community members. Staffed entirely by dedicated individuals representing every neighborhood in New Haven, the team offers thorough insight into the challenges and circumstances each community faces including the need for attention to the reentry population, those with mental health challenges, disabilities, educational deficiencies, immigrant and refugee status, youth, etc. I am incredibly impressed by the level of organization this small group has achieved since 2013. If NHW were my only experience with workforce development I might be inclined to think it was ordinary but it is, in fact, extraordinary. NHW works hard to create and maintain sustainable partnerships with local agencies, institutions, and businesses to effectively support its members' job needs and wants no matter what circumstances they face.

At NHW, you will get out what you put in. Working diligently with my job coach to keep my portfolio current and in application ready condition according to the job climate, I was networking, training, and interviewing. Volunteering at NHW caused me to re-direct my career focus to community action and social justice. I subsequently joined AmeriCorps Public Allies Connecticut and was fortunate to have NHW host me for my term of service. Today, I work at EMERGE Connecticut, Inc. YouthBuild supporting young people with educational deficiencies and criminal history reenter the workforce and rebuild their communities and lives. I am privileged to have had a long and complete experience with NHW which has served as inspiration and means to end up doing what I do today.

Yours in service,

Shannon L. Finan-Fulop